REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

1. REPORT DATE *(DD-MM-YYYY)* 01-05-2013	2. REPORT TYPE Master of Military Studies Research Paper	3. DATES COVERED *(From - To)* September 2012 - April 2013

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Need for Transition	5a. CONTRACT NUMBER N/A
	5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A
	5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A

6. AUTHOR(S) Bowers, William H., Major, US ARMY	5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A
	5e. TASK NUMBER N/A
	5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A

7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) USMC Command and Staff College Marine Corps University 2076 South Street Quantico, VA 22134-5068	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A

9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) N/A
	11. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER N/A

12. DISTRIBUTION AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES
N/A

14. ABSTRACT
In the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq, the United States lead coalition floundered in exploiting the initiative of its successful initial operation. The reason for the slow development from Phase III to Phase IV was due to an institutional lack of knowledge on how to transition from high intensity operations to stability and nation building operations. Before, during and even after the invasion, there has never been a doctrinal approach described on how to conduct a proper military transition from Phase III to Phase IV. Using the invasion and occupation of Iraq as a case study, this study brings out the lack of understanding of the situation in which transition played a vital role in offensive operations, primarily the overthrow of a government and what that means. The U.S. planning effort to take strategic and operational objectives to create tactical tasks to meet those objectives was poorly developed and created a situation that would take years to overcome.

15. SUBJECT TERMS
Military transition, Phase III, Phase IV, Stability Operations, Transitional Operations

16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 35	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Marine Corps University / Command and Staff College
a. REPORT Unclass	b. ABSTRACT Unclass	c. THIS PAGE Unclass			19b. TELEPONE NUMBER (*Include area code*) (703) 784-3330 (Admin Office)

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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

TITLE:

THE NEED FOR TRANSITION

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Date: 05/01/2013

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Executive Summary

Title: The understanding of military transition and the importance of its role

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Thesis: . For 21st century campaigns, structured in accord with the Joint Force Commanders (JFC) phasing model, what Brigade Combat Level (BCT) tasks must be accomplished in order to properly set the conditions for Division tactical level transition from Phase III operations to Phase IV operations.

Discussion: In the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq, the United States lead coalition floundered in exploiting the initiative of its successful initial operation. The reason for the slow development from Phase III to Phase IV was due to an institutional lack of knowledge on how to transition from high intensity operations to stability and nation building operations. Before, during and even after the invasion, there has never been a doctrinal approach described on how to conduct a proper military transition from Phase III to Phase IV. Using the invasion and occupation of Iraq as a case study, this study brings out the lack of understanding of the situation in which transition played a vital role in offensive operations, primarily the overthrow of a government and what that means. The U.S. planning effort to take strategic and operational objectives to create tactical tasks to meet those objectives was poorly developed and created a situation that would take years to overcome. In the aftermath of this situation, there are now several approaches on how to handle transition, but better yet, how to prepare units and staffs to support the higher level objectives and tasks in order to succeed.

Conclusion: Although there has been some development within the military on defining the term of Transition, it is still a flaw on the military to not have adopted this term within its doctrine. Commanders now know how important transition is and how to implement it into their training and operational planning in order to support and accomplish the tasks laid out before them. The Army must adopt an approach to transition in order to create a baseline knowledge of the subject and how to approach each situation in future operations.

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The understanding of Military transition and the importance of its role

The ability for future military commanders to know and understand what transitional operations are, in terms of Phase III to Phase IV operations, could be the difference between winning and losing the next American conflict. For 21st century campaigns, structured in accord with the Joint Force Commanders (JFC) phasing model, what Brigade Combat Level (BCT) tasks must be accomplished in order to properly set the conditions for Division tactical level transition from Phase III operations to Phase IV operations. Transition is defined as a movement, passage, or change from one position, state, stage, subject, concept, etc., to another.[1] The transition of military phases from Phase III to Phase IV is quite possibly one of the most complex operations to define. There is not a clear delineated line in which a Commander crosses and gives the order to change the mission to meet the Phase IV objectives. With transition playing such a vital role in the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) in 2003, it has become a great point of discussion in Primary Military Education (PME) forums everywhere. Taking the lessons learned and identified from the 10 years since the invasion of Iraq and what the military now knows about transition, future wars will be planned in greater detail. There is not any one certain event that causes the change from Phase III to Phase IV, but a series of events that must take place and be established in order to have a successful transition of phases. Given the extreme complexity of transition operations, one must consider what transition is and how it works; how to plan for and incorporate it; as well as how Brigade Combat Team Commanders implement it so that General Officers can manage it.

Background

Since the birth of the nation, the United States military has been involved in a multitude of conflicts that were labeled as both conventional and unconventional wars.[2] Each one of these wars was unique in each of its own way, except for the fact that stability operations played a vital role in almost every one of those wars. The United States lead occupation of Iraq provides a useful example for examining how a military transition following post Phase III operations should not occur. All of the lessons for what not to do following a successful invasion came as lessons learned from the initial months of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As coalition forces began the invasion of Iraq, there was little doubt about the success that was going to follow. If anything like the Gulf War, this war would be fairly quick, as long as Iraq did not use weapons of mass destruction. The ground force of the coalition for the invasion was just over 145,000 personnel and 247 tanks.[3] Figures that were well below the perceived numbers requested by military officials during the planning and lead up to the war. Iraqi forces were estimated to have a strength of 400,000 troops and 4,000 tanks.[4] During the opening weeks of Operation Iraqi Freedom, coalition forces fought the battle that it wanted to fight, mistakenly believing it would be the only battle it faced.[5] They were fighting a campaign plan for a few battles, not a plan to prevail and secure victory.[6]

In the immediate days following the famous "Thunder Run" (April 05-07, 2003) and the collapse of the Iraqi regime and Baghdad, U.S. forces were unfocused and underprepared due to the pre-war expectations. Leaders lacked the guidance to provide direction for their subordinate forces as to what should occur next. With minimal follow

on orders and unprepared to become an occupational force, U.S. forces had to quickly adjust and assess how to succeed and thrive in a lawless land. With little to no prior training, supplies, or interpreters, the forces had to adopt and make do with their current situation. Ruling the areas of operation, through physical and psychological intimidation, U.S. forces were able to gain some control over the area. This was a result of what would become known as one of the major planning mistakes prior to the invasion, the pre-war assumptions. According to the original plan and assumptions, the Iraqi Police forces, which intelligence sources asserted were going to capitulate and join the American cause, were going to be used for maintaining order of the local populace.[7] Coalition forces were barely doing enough at this time to provide force protection for themselves from the civilians, as there were not enough troops on the ground in order to stop the unlawful behavior.

Only days after the collapse of Baghdad, did it take for the local civilians warm hospitality to wear off for their "liberators." Soon, the locals were searching for the basic needs to survive, and they were looking in the direction of coalition forces. The problem was that the United States military was not prepared for what was about to ensue with the loss of the operational initiative. This would spurn resentment among the Iraqi people and would take years to reverse. With little to no guidance or training, the U.S. forces did what they could in order to keep the civilians at bay. The result of a short temper mindset of the U.S. forces, based off of an uneasiness from the difficulty of the inability to communicate with locals created issues resulting in coalition Soldiers physically manhandling civilians in order to get their point across. This all derived from a lack of training in the escalation of force and a failure to create contingency plans for the

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unexpected. Coalition forces would later learn that this was not the best tactic for winning the hearts and minds of the local populace.

During the coming days and weeks, the occupational forces would learn how to manage the civilians, but still lacked in guidance from senior leaders. The learning process was fast and furious at times, but through patience and a sense of trust, both Soldiers and civilians began to try and communicate as best as possible in order to coexist with each other. A lack of interpreters, made it extremely difficult for forces to do much of anything, as there was minimal to no previous language training prior to the invasion. Through the use of local civilians who spoke broken English and acted as interpreters, did the initial occupation forces communicate verbally with the locals. At this time, there was still minimal communication being disseminated down from higher, as to what each unit's task and purpose was. This minimal guidance was a leadership failure in regards to being able to take strategic and operational objectives and nest them with tactical operations in order to attain those objectives. Leaders at this time were more concerned with what had been the outcome for Phase III as opposed to tying that success into a rollover for Phase IV.

Coalition forces found itself in a position in which it knew that it may end up, but just not nearly as fast as it did in reality. The prewar planning estimated that Phases I – III were going to take up to 135 days to complete, and that the amount of time to complete Phase IV would be undeterminable based off of unknown scenarios.[8] The military was very underprepared when Phase III ended and Phase IV initially began, as were all of the other governmental agencies. Although there were meetings about the planning of Phase IV between CFLCC and V Corps, there never was an operations order

created or disseminated down to lower units in order to develop the supporting plans.[9] As late as June 2003, the CFLCC position was that the coalition was still not in Phase IV yet.[10] There was a very short timeframe from when major combat started and when it ceased, just weeks later in which the coalition forces had to react in order to set the tone for the occupation. The coalition was already too late, as the tone had been set, and the coalition was unprepared for an occupation.

The U.S. lead coalition should have known better, as this was not the first time that it had occupied a country. This would be, however, one of the first times in which they would be trying to re-establish a country while still fighting a war (or soon to be insurgency). Looking back at history, which would drive the OIF plans for the restructuring of Iraq, would be post World War II Germany and Japan. Unlike WWII, those two countries would sign an unconditional surrender document. This allowed for the forces of that time, to meet with the former leadership and remaining governmental leadership and help rebuild those countries together. These results are just part of the bold assumptions that would be made by U.S. leaders during the planning for OIF.

At this point, the transition from Phase III to Phase IV had occurred and it had done so without a synchronized plan at the tactical level. Tactical level leaders derived tasks and purposes for their units to carry out, but these were not nested with the strategic objectives laid out by higher. This was all a result of failed assumptions in the prewar planning. Colonel Gregory Gardner, a member of the Joint Staff and then also on the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), stated, (The reason for the omission for a Phase IV plan at CENTCOM) "Politically, we'd made a decision that we'd turn it over to the Iraqis in June (2003), so why have a Phase IV plan?"[11] This was a bold assumption that

coalition forces would pay for during the coming years. The United States and its

military forces were in trouble at this time and had not yet realized it.

<div align="center">**Doctrine**</div>

When dealing with the transition of military operations from Phase III to Phase

IV, there is a major issue that arises, in the fact that there is very limited doctrine that

defines military transition and how it occurs. Transition is extremely hard and complex to

define. Primarily because according to the JFC phasing model, transition is not an actual

phase. According to the JFC phasing model, there are six operational phases; 0. Shaping,

1. Deter, 2. Seize Initiative, 3. Dominate, 4. Stabilize, 5. Enable Civil Authority.[12] Each

one of these phases plays an integral role in the entire operation. With Phases 0-3 being

the primary build up and execution phases of combat operations, and Phases 4 & 5 being

the stabilization of the area of operations and turn over of the area to civil authorities.

Transition is the nebulous time in between phases that is commonly referred to in military

speak, but often misunderstood.

In 2009, the Army War College Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute

(PKSOI) held a two day conference with multiple forces and international partners

involved just to try and define transition.[13] The most accepted definition of transition that

was derived at the conference was, "Transition is defined as both a multi-disciplinary

process and points of change, in time, when conditions for stability are achieved in

security, justice and reconciliation, infrastructure and economic development,

humanitarian and social well-being, governance and reconciliation, through the enabling

and empowering of Host Nation Institutions, in order to facilitate enduring positive

effects and improved quality of life for citizens."[14] Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint*

Operations, and JP-5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, utilizes a similar definition of

transition stating it "marks a change of focus between phases or between the ongoing

operations and execution of a branch or sequel. Transitions between phases are designed

to be distinct shifts in focus of operations by the joint force, often accompanied by

changes in command or support relationships and priorities of effort."[15] Oddly enough

the new JP 3-0 was published two years after the PKSOI conference and the definition

from there was not adopted into the new joint doctrine. There still has yet to be an

adopted definition of the term transition, even after 10 years from the start of Operation

Iraqi Freedom.

Not surprisingly, the two publications with the most information on transition

operations are both Civil-Military (CivMil) related publications. JP 3-57, *Civil-Military

Operations*, and FM 3-05.401, *Civil Affairs Tactics, Techniques and Procedures*, offer

the most insight into transition operations. Both of these two publications are directed

toward Civil Affairs activities and how they should posture themselves during transition

between the conclusion of combat operations and prior to conducting stability operations.

Although this does offer little assistance to combat operations, it does provide an insight

to planners in order to look at what will need to occur in Phase III in order to accomplish

certain tasks later, therefore they can develop plans and operations to help support those

future tasks.

Transition, or transition operations, are mentioned in several other Field Manuals

(FM) and Joint Publications (JP) in them, but none of them offers a definition of what or

how transition between phases of operations should occur. Transition is mentioned in

several of the more current publications to include FM 3-24 (*Counterinsurgency*), FM 3-

07 (*Stability Operations*), and FM 3-90.6 (*Brigade Combat Team*) just to name a few. The striking issue is that none of these publications delve into the intricacies of what transition is and how it occurs. The fact that transition is vaguely identified in multiple publications, is a true testament to its importance, but not so much that there is not a direct approach to it and how it actually occurs. With the emphasis being on transition from Phase III to Phase IV, transition may or may not happen concurrently across the area of operations.

Transition is something that is managed by General Officers at the Division level and above, but is inherently executed at the Brigade or Regimental level and below. All of the initial operations conducted in both Iraq and Afghanistan were considered to be centralized operations, but once the initial attack was stopped and units were assigned areas of responsibility, operations then were conducted in a more decentralized manner. This allows for the commander to give his guidance and layout a specific mission objective, and then let his subordinate commanders to make decisions and conduct their own operations in order to achieve the tactical and operational level goals. Commanders have to be very open minded and trustworthy when it comes to these types of decentralized operations. The commander must define very specific guidance that will set parameters as to what a subordinate leader can make decisions about. The commander's guidance and decision-making must be nested with how the subordinates' operations tie into all of the levels of war in order to deliver the message that needs to be sent or create a positive environment for transition to occur. This will also allow for unity of command and unity of effort to be addressed by the overarching ground commander to their

subordinates to ensure that operational and strategic level goals are being attained at the tactical level.

Transition should not be time driven, but event driven. Different areas of the operating environment may be at different levels of preparedness for the switch, which could either delay or speed up the transition, if it had to happen concurrently. In every war, no two battlefields or areas of operation (AO) will ever be the same. They will all be unique in their own special way, with that in mind, transition follows the area of operation, meaning that some AOs are more difficult and hostile than others. Some have public support and some do not. This allows for each subordinate leader to evaluate his AO and determine if certain events transpire or never transpire, then it might be time to conduct the transition within that area. JP 3-0 states, "The need to move into another phase normally is identified by assessing that a set of objectives has been achieved or that the enemy has acted in a manner that requires a major change in focus. Thus, the transition to a new phase is usually driven by events rather than time."[16] This is why transition must be lead at the Battalion and Brigade levels. The reason for these personnel to lead the transition is because they are the battle space owners. They have direct interaction with that specific area of operations and are able to judge whether or not their areas are ready for the transition. These leaders tend to have a much smaller window to look through than does a general officer, which may have several windows to look through.

In conclusion, transition is a continuous process that is managed by general officers but executed by subordinate leaders. According to doctrine, there is not a right

or wrong way of conducting transition. Leaders lead transition, with General Officers

residing over transition through unity of command and unity of effort.

Planning

"War plans cover every aspect of a war, and weave them all into a single operation that
must have a single, ultimate objective in which all particular aims are reconciled. No one
starts a war or rather, no one ought to do so without first being clear in his mind what he
intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."
Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 1832[17]

Planning is an adaptive process that ebbs and flows with the situation; as

understanding of the situation evolves, planners develop branches and sequels to account

for such evolution.[18] Planning is a continuous activity, constantly adapting as the

conditions of the operational environment are shaped by activities, both natural and

human.[19]

Developing plans for military operations at the strategic and operational level can

be a long and arduous process that can take as long as any organization decides.

Depending on the magnitude of the details, to which the staff of that organization is

instructed to go, can depend on the length of the process. The nature of the planning

process, whether it be the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), Marine Corps

Planning Process (MCPP), or the Joint Operation Planning Process (JOPP) are all the

same. When planning, knowing and understanding what the problem is, as well as what

the overall goal or objective is, is extremely critical. Commanders and their staffs must

also know and understand exactly what the strategic goal is and which operational level

objectives need to be executed in order to attain or meet the strategic level goals. If there

is a failure in this understanding, then there will be mission failure. The ability to digest

strategic level objectives all the way down to the tasks to be conducted at the tactical

level in order to achieve the strategic objectives is a trying process that takes an

inordinate amount of time and knowledge. Transition is not something that is necessarily planned for, but Phases III and IV are. In order to get from combat operations to stability operations, there has to be a segue from one to the other. This is where transition comes into play.

Operational level planning can be a defining moment for the future, overall success of the operation. At this level, a planner must not only be a well-versed tactician, and if not already an extremely competent cultural expert of the future area of operations. They must know where to go in order to get the information on the AO. Thus meaning that one must not only know how to apply forces, but he must also know the current situation of the AO in multiple facets to include politics, economics, security, services, etc. One of the hardest tasks that the planner will have to do is, digest down the strategic objectives laid out before him and apply those to operational and tactical level tasks. This is to ensure that the military units are conducting the necessary operations in order to support future operations that will allow for stability operations to occur. These stability operations will be the catalyst for the turnover of the country back to the host nation (HN) in a more sovereign state than it was originally.

A prime example of having to be a subject matter expert on an area lies within the Strategic Studies Institute's Mission Matrix for Iraq. This is a task list derived of 135 tasks that need to be accomplished in order to reconstruct Iraq.[20] This is a document that was created by strategic level planners for an operational environment for Phase IV of Iraq. This document not only lays out the task, but also who is responsible for each task by time as well.[21] Clearly a majority of these tasks are not found within a unit's mission essential task list, therefore, units and Commanders must ensure that they familiarize

themselves with each task in order to be more prepared for reconstruction or occupation in a foreign country.

When planning combat operations, there has to be a designated end state that is directed from someone higher in the chain of command. JP 5-0 defines end state as "what the commander desires in military end state conditions that define mission success by friendly forces. Provides the strategic end state and higher command's military end state and describes how reaching the JFC's military end state conditions supports higher headquarters end state guidance."[22] This end state will define exactly what type of mission it is and how it will be conducted. It will also dictate what the array of forces may be or should be at the end of the operation. Military planning must start with a view of the desired outcome of the war – not the outcome of major conflict, but the creation of the desired political circumstances that signal the true end of war.[23] They must do so both because forces, and especially forces on the ground, will be intimately involved in creating those circumstances, and because the way in which military action unfolds will heavily shape subsequent developments.[24] As noted before, transition is not an actual operational phase according to the JFC phasing model. Therefore, it is a process that is very hard to plan. From lessons learned in previous wars, the planners and plans team must work backwards from the desired end state until the shaping phase or current time.

Planning backwards allows for the commanders to decide what they need on the ground in certain situations or AOs at the end of major combat operations. Allowing the commander to know exactly how he wants to array his forces in accord with their strengths and weaknesses, based off of their assets organically available to them. The commander and his staff will identify these needs through mission analysis or problem

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framing, depending on the planning method being used. This will make the staff fully understand what the problem at hand really is, as well as starting to develop a way to solve it. Once the problem is identified, this will, or should, allow the commander to develop a plan for a smooth transition from Phase III to Phase IV operations. Phases are designed to be conducted sequentially, but some activities from a phase may begin in a previous phase and continue into subsequent phases.[25] The ability to plan backwards from a desired end state is an extremely tough gamble, because anything can, more than likely, will change. Planning does not aim to predict the future but contains an element of forecasting. Effective planning provides an informed forecast of how future events are likely to unfold based on understanding the current situation and conditions of the operational environment.[26]

Interagency coordination is another major point of friction when it comes to planning for Phases III and IV at the operational level. The primary concern for coordination between the other governmental and nongovernmental agencies and the military is, who will control or execute which missions or parts of Phases. This issue came to fruition on the lessons learned and after action reviews of the pre-war planning prior to the invasion of Iraq.[27] In the months and years leading up to the invasion of Iraq, there were a series of changes that occurred in the planning between CENTCOM, the Department of State, and the Department of Defense.[28] During that time, it was believed that the Department of State would lead the Phase IV operations, but that would soon change. It was believed that a possible military government, which is what was used in post World War II Germany and Japan, would lead the reconstruction efforts.[29] There was a mutual feeling between both the State Department and the Department of Defense

that neither side could plan for nor execute Phase IV. This point of discord would remain

up until the war started. Eventually, the DoD would establish itself as the lead post-war

agency to ensure unity of command under the Secretary of Defense.[30] These plans would

change again later to the use of a newly created Task Force IV, and then with the

construction of Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA). [31]

Reality would have it that the DoD did not have any experience with reconstruction as

well.[32]

The key players for planning, especially with interagency organizations really

does depend on the mission and what outcome is desired. The primary issue is to get the

correct agency involved in not only the planning portion of the operation, but the

execution as well. These agencies have different assets available to them that the military

does not, and vice a versa. Both the military and civilian counterparts know and

understand that they need each other in order to succeed and accomplish the mission.

The reach does go further than assets as well, as some have monetary funds that are

solely earmarked for reconstruction and stability operations alone. The key for the

military is to allow these agencies to try and take over for Phase IV operations, as it is not

inherent of the military to do these types of operations. Dr. Conrad Crane notes:

> The ironic truth about Phase IV operations is that the U.S. military would rather
> not deal with them or would like to quickly hand them off to other U.S.
> government agencies or international organizations, which, in turn argue about
> that nationbuilding tasks are rightfully within their sphere of responsibility.
> However, while there is universal agreement about who should ideally be
> rebuilding states, the harsh historical reality is that the world's greatest
> nationbuilding institution, when properly resourced and motivated, is the U.S.
> Military.[33]

Pride must be set aside for the greater good of the strategic mission, in the fact that both the military and civilian agencies must agree to the conditions of transition in order to see the mission to be a success.

One concern that military planners must be aware of when planning for a war is something that the U.S. planners were aware of prior to the invasion of Iraq, which, were the legal ramifications for being labeled an occupation force. The military planners understood that words matter. They had to make a conscious effort to not use the word occupy or occupation during the planning process for this very reason. The Geneva-Hague and the Law of Land Warfare is pretty clear that an invading force is an occupying power and as such has a daunting array of requirements.[34] The U.S. and Great Britain saw themselves as the great "liberators" to Iraq. The rest of the world did not see it that way, to include the United Nations. It was just over two months after the beginning of the war (May 22, 2003) that the United Nations passed UN Security Council Resolution 1483. This resolution labeled the U.S. and Great Britain as "occupying powers" of Iraq.[35] This labeling changed the way in which the coalition forces had to conduct business and deepen their commitment to a free and sovereign Iraq. It goes as deep as re-establishing a national bank system, monitoring the export of oil and the proceeds from that oil, as well as funding a $1 billion to reestablish the Iraqi government.[36] It is well above the commitment level of what those forces thought would be needed to do the prescribed operation that is set out for during the invasion, but had no real choice at the time, as the U.N. passed the resolution in which they would have to act.

The real need for discussion on military transition operations came about after the invasion of Iraq. The time frame from April 2003 until November 2003 provides an

insightful example of a failed transition. Just weeks after the fall of Baghdad, on 01 May

2003, President George Bush stood on the deck of the USS Abraham Lincoln and

declared "an end to major combat operations" under a banner that read, "Mission

Accomplished".[37] This was the first sign that the higher leadership was disjointed as to

what was taking place on the ground in Iraq. Conrad Crane stated that, "A war tactically

and operationally won can still lead to a strategic defeat if transition operations are poorly

planned or executed."[38] This was primarily because the U.S. was unaware of how to

handle the situation and approach the matter, especially at the tactical level. The U.S.

military lost the dominant position in Iraq in the summer of 2003 and has been

scrambling to recover ever since.[39] Major Isaiah Wilson, who served as an official

historian of the campaign and later as a war planner in Iraq, wrote, "In the two to three

months of ambiguous transition, U.S. forces slowly lost the momentum and the

initiative…gained over an off-balanced enemy."[40] The coalition leadership failed to

understand and grasp the situation at hand.

Many wonder if the transition that occurred, or failed to occur in Iraq in the spring

and summer of 2003, was a byproduct of poor planning or poor leadership. Some would

say both. Realistically, there were too many plans and leaders who only wanted to

destroy the enemy and focus on Phase III. They did not want to be the part-time

politician that General Officers have to be, and focus more on Phase IV, and the

reconstruction efforts. There was an intuition that military leaders were all in to defeat

Saddam Hussein, as was the President and many of his staff, but they did not fully think

out or prepare for what was to come, nor the speed in which it came. Most observers

agree that the Administration's planning for "post-war" Iraq – for all the activities and

resources that would be required on "the day after," to help bring about the strategic objective, a "free and prosperous Iraq" – was not nearly as thorough as the planning for combat operations.[41] Some of the difficulties that arose during Phase IV came from the fact the military objective did not match the political objective.[42]

General Franks and his staff created their assumptions based off of the previous success that the military had in Afghanistan with the defeat of the Taliban just weeks prior to their initial planning sessions for Iraq, as well as the U.S. military's overwhelming success from Desert Storm. CENTCOM assumed that Iraq would be the same as Afghanistan in regards to an interim government establishing a paramilitary security force that would be drawn from some of the better units of the defeated Iraqi Army.[43] It was envisioned that these units would work in conjunction with coalition military forces and to help restore order and prevent armed conflicts among ethnic, religious, or tribal factions.[44] General Franks concluded, "this model had been used effectively in Afghanistan."[45] Therefore, it was named the Afghan Model.

The ongoing war in Afghanistan did play a role in the effects of the planning for Iraq, but Secretary Rumsfeld was not going to let Afghanistan get into the way of Iraq.[46] General Franks and Secretary Rumsfeld both felt that the Afghan model, of using the pre-established government and recently defeated military to help stabilize the country was going to be the key to victory in Iraq. The main concern for both men, was not Phase IV and how to manage that, but more so, how to overthrow Saddam in the quickest manner, just as it had the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was insinuated that the interim government and other U.S. or coalition agencies would worry about Phase IV later.

For Phase III, also known as the dominating phase, the CENTCOM staff derived a clear and concise plan, known as Cobra II.[47] In order to support the strategic objective, the CENTCOM staff derived a bold operational objective. The plan aimed to:

> Destabilize, isolate, and overthrow the Iraqi regime and provide new support to a new, broad-based government; destroy Iraqi WMD capability and infrastructure; protect allies and supporters from Iraqi threats and attacks; destroy terrorist networks in Iraq, gather intelligence on global terrorism, detain terrorists and war criminals, and free individuals unjustly detained under the Iraqi regime; and support international efforts to set conditions for long-term stability in Iraq and the region.[48]

From the initial planning and analysis conducted by the CENTCOM staff and outside agencies, it was believed that Phases I-III would take up to as much as 135 days, while General Tommy Franks, CENTCOM Commander, explained to President Bush on December 28, 2001, Phase IV, "post hostility operations would take years, not months to complete."[49] He also identified the duration of the operation as unknown, and the president knowingly approved of the concept.[50]

The Phase IV plan, also known as the stabilize phase, was known as OPLAN ECLIPSE II.[51] This would be the hardest and most arduous phase to coordinate and plan. Phase IV would have to be meticulously thought out and war-gamed down to minute details for it would be the embryonic stages of the re-establishing of Iraq as a sovereign nation again. There were two extreme planning issues when it came to planning Phase IV. The first issue would be on troop strength. General Franks established the lowest estimate of the number of troops needed at the end of Phase III to 250,000.[52] He asserted that this was the minimal amount of personnel needed to sufficiently execute the tasks perceived and provide the security that were likely to be performed in post-war Iraq.[53] This number would never be reached, as the Secretary of Defense, would never support

the military on the troop levels, even though the military had over 350,000 troops in both

Germany and Japan at the same time in during their post Word War II occupations.[54]

Secretary Rumsfeld's self-confident stubbornness made him a big part of the problem,

not the solution.[55] Sometime after the invasion, Ambassador Paul Bremmer was quoted

as saying, "The single most important change – the one thing that would have improved

the situation – would have been having more Troops in Iraq at the beginning and

throughout."[56]

Andrew Rathmell, a British defense expert and member of the CPA as a strategic

planner later wrote:

> The fact that pre-war planning assumptions proved to be badly flawed is not a
> sign of a systemic problem in itself – mistakes happen and the weakness of the
> Iraqi state surprised many observers. The systemic problem was that these
> assumptions could not be effectively challenged in the coalition political-military
> planning process. This unwillingness to challenge assumptions and question
> established plans persisted during the course of the occupation, giving rise to the
> ironic refrain among disgruntled coalition planners that "optimism is not a plan."
> This failure was compounded by a persistent tendency in both the military and
> civilian chains to avoid reporting bad news and not to plan for worst case, or other
> case, contingencies.[57]

This statement supports the fact that many personnel were afraid to challenge some of the

political leaders at this time.

The second major issue surrounding the planning for Phase IV would be who was

going to plan and execute Phase IV operations. This was never really decided. It was not

until December of 2002, when Retired Army General Gary Luck, serving as a senior

advisor to an internal war-game called, Internal Look, that he asked multiple questions

regarding the military's role in Phase IV.[58] It was not until his recommendation that the

military stood up a planning cell in order to fill this planning gap, as well as starting

coordination with the other agencies and organizations that would play a very detailed

role in Phase IV.[59] There were multiple organizations, which were created over the next couple of months in order to support or lead Phase IV. This would waste countless man-hours in creating their own plans for post war Iraq. Overall, the decision alternated between military and civilian organizations being the lead for Phase IV several times over the 16 months leading up to the war.

The fog and internal confusion of Phase IV planning would continue until after Operation Iraqi Freedom had begun. Even after the war had started and the President had announced "an end to major combat operations" a plan for Phase IV had yet to be distributed from CFLCC to V Corps.[60] As late as June 2003, the CFLCC position was that the coalition was not in Phase IV yet.[61] The miscommunication and indecisiveness that was taking place at echelons above reality on the battlefield were the major hindrance to operational and tactical success.

Planning plays such an important role in transition operations. If a plan is not synchronized correctly, there is a good chance that it may fail. The plan must always be adjusted according to the situation. A commander and his staff cannot simply come up with a plan, put it on the shelf and then execute it when the time is right. The plan must evolve with the situation in order to support the operational and strategic objectives. Clearly, the lack of communication and synchronization of the plan is what created an insurgency and caused coalition forces to operate in a more defensive approach rather than an offensive approach for several years to come.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Having used many lessons learned from post-war Iraq and the most current doctrine available, the definition of military transition is still very vague. There are a

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couple of sources that mention what transition is, but since it is not an actual operation, it is quickly disregarded. This is an element of military operations that needs to be studied more carefully and incorporated into doctrine. Although the military felt strong enough about transition to hold a conference to define the term, they have still failed to adopt it into doctrine at this time.[62] Military leaders and planners must know and understand exactly what transition is. The need to understand of how to incorporate these operations correctly into a post combat scenario, or worse, while still in combat, is invaluable.

BCT Commanders must ensure that they know their environment, how to identify the problem, as well as understand and know how to create tasks that support the operational level objectives. There are not specific tasks that can be identified to support transition any more clear than the Strategic Studies Institute Mission Matrix.[63] This list of tasks can allow commanders to understand the dynamics of the situation in which they are about to be involved with. Commanders along with their staffs can plan accordingly from end state to shaping, in order to align their units with what they perceive as being their decisive and sustaining operations and allow them to posture correctly. This also allows for the commander to disseminate his plan in a timely manner and allows the staff to have some initial planning guidance and criteria in which to base operations and branch plans.

Leaders must recognize that the wars of today and tomorrow are going to involve both the military and civilian agencies. Commanders and their staffs must get to know and understand the capacity in which each of these agencies operate and what both the military and civilian personnel can do to mutually benefit from each other on the battlefield. Staffs must be trained as well. They must understand the situation and how

to decipher certain tasks down to subordinate elements, as well as to be able to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses in order to pursue outside help from other agencies or military organizations.

Commanders can understand how to implement some sort of PME in order to ensure that all of their subordinates within their organization fully grasp what is about to be asked of them and for good reason. Nearly all of the BCT commanders have spent multiple tours in Iraq and Afghanistan at this time, and understand the nature of the decentralized operations that it takes to be successful in both countries and how the junior leaders play such a vital role in that success. These junior leaders and their subordinates deserve to know and understand. Leaders owe it to their subordinates to educate them as to why things are, and why it is important for subordinates to know and understand what it is they are being asked to do. This will enable subordinates to be more assertive and develop them into good junior leaders. A commander cannot go wrong with this training.

The one policy recommendation would be to set a standard and define what transition operations are and how to effectively train and plan for them. It is imperative that the military learns from this experience in order to prepare for success the next time around. The military needs to set a baseline and adopt some of the lessons learned from over 10 years at war and capture that information in the latest doctrine. The military cannot afford another summer of 2003. A failed transition played such a vital role in Operation Iraqi Freedom, that it set the coalition and occupational forces back several years, costing the U.S. billions of dollars and thousands of lives.

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